

Andrew Jackson to Henry Baldwin, January 24, 1823, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO HENRY BALDWIN.¹

¹ Draft. Henry Baldwin was M. C. from Pennsylvania 1817–1822, associate justice of the Supreme Court 1830–1844.

Hermitage, January 24, 1823.

D'r Sir, I had on last evening the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 2d instant. upon the Subject to which it refers I have hitherto avoided speaking, and should still have continued in that course but for the frankness of your letter.

The course ever pursued by me and which I have allways thought congenial with the republican principles of my country, was on no occasion to solicit for office; but at the same [time] not to decline any public demand made upon my services. I have heretofore pursued this course and I am now too far advanced in life, to attempt any differrent one. For the efforts it has been in my power to make for my country, and which have in some respects I hope proved beneficial, I have nothing to ask—nothing to claim: satisfied that on all occasions my principle object was fully to perform my duty, I shall be amply satisfied, if my exertions shall be so appreciated, as to enable me, to bear with me in retirement the confidence and good opinion of the virtuous and well deserving of the comunity.

I might venture the assertion that my portion of public service has been performed, If twelve years exposure to fatigue and numerous privations can warrent the expression [and that] Under this sentiment I had gone into retirement with a desire rather to be a spectator, than actor in the passing scenes of life. The Legislature of Tennessee have ventured to

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present me to the public as one to be voted for at the next presidential election: in this they did not consult me: it was but a further manifestation of the regard which on more than one occasion they have shewn me, and from a knowledge of my political creed that the services of every man belonged to the country, when that country demanded it, they inferred that while none should solicit, so none should decline when called to act. Under this view I could not complain, that my name was submitted by them to the consideration of my countrymen, or entertain the thought of refusing a situation where my services might by possibility be deemed usefull.²

² In his letter, dated Jan. 1, 1823, Baldwin had said: "It is unnecessary for me to say how fully the general sentiment in this part of the country coincides with mine or with what pleasure I shall contribute my most active efforts for your success. will you then permit me to ask you whether your friends may calculate on your acquiescence in their most earnest wishes and your consent to their exertions. Your answer shall be considered confidential or otherwise as you may think proper to direct me." But see also Edward Patchell to Jackson, p. 263, *post*.

At whatever period my country may require my services they shall be, as they ever have been, freely extended. It is the principle upon which I have uniformly acted—one from which I shall never depart.

I am Sir with sincere regard, and great respect, your mo. obdt. servt.